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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 5716  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 3615  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2071  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 6845  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 0700  
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INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 6587

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR PREL KPAO OPRC SY

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Syria/Saudi Arabia,  
Syria/Egypt, Junblatt, Iraq, Palestinian Territories (1/6-9)  
¶1. Summary: Syrian papers reported President Asad's summit  
meetings in Jeddah with King Abdullah and in Sharm al-Sheikh with  
President Mubarak. The goal of Asad's surprise trips to Saudi

Arabia and Egypt was apparently to seek support from Arab leaders  
as he faces a U.N. probe into alleged Syrian involvement in the  
assassination of a former Lebanese leader. Asad is seeking  
stronger Arab support for Syria, including convening an Arab  
summit to discuss Syria's strained relations with the West,  
according to some Arab diplomats.

Papers also reported that President Asad received two telephone  
calls, from Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Libyan President  
Qaddafi, that focused on current developments in the region.

On Iraq, papers reported a statement by British FM Jack Straw  
that Britain will withdraw its forces from Iraq in a few months.  
Headlines featured the killing of 17 US marines, 5 in Fallujah,  
and 12 in a helicopter crash in Tal Afar.

Commentators criticized a statement by Lebanese Druze leader  
Walid Junblatt calling on the United States to invade Syria, as  
it did Iraq. Isam Dari in government-owned Tishreen charged that  
Junblatt's anti-Syria campaign is not the result of a dispute  
with the political regime in Syria, but is part of the role that  
he has been assigned to play in the American-Zionist scheme in  
the region.

End summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"A long day of Arab solidarity. President Asad holds two summits,  
in Jeddah and Sharm al-Sheikh, with King Abdullah and President  
Mubarak. The Jeddah statement reiterates the importance of an  
Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, the Palestinian territories,  
and the Lebanese Sheba Farms and reactivation of the joint Saudi-  
Syrian committee. King Abdullah: We are keen to enhance Syrian-  
Lebanese relations. Talks in Sharm al-Sheikh focus on the outcome  
of the Jeddah summit and President Mubarak's consultations in  
Saudi Arabia and France" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/9)

"President Asad receives two phone calls, one from the Iranian  
President and the other from the Libyan leader, on the situation  
in the region. President Asad receives a phone call from Saudi  
King Abdullah on the latest developments in the region"

"A US entry visa is issued for Junblatt as the price for his escalation against Syria and Lebanese nationalist forces"  
(Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/9)

"Britain seeks to use Lebanon for secret tombs for CIA and Scotland Yard prisoners. Straw carries a security deal to deport British prisoners to Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/8)

"US forces attack headquarters of the Association of Moslem Scholars and arrest five Iraqis. Killing of 17 US marines, 5 in Fallujah, 12 in a helicopter crash in Tal Afar" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/9)

"Jack Straw in Baghdad: Britain is to withdraw its forces from Iraq in a few months. Washington negotiates with leaders of militants and contemplates modification of its strategy in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/8)

"Syria strongly condemns terrorist escalation against civilians in Iraq, calling on Iraqis to enhance national unity" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/7)

"The White House refuses to talk about post-Sharon stage. Israel prepares to announce Sharon's death" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/8)

"Sharon's case becomes more critical. Israel submerged in political chaos" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th,

"Israeli forces continue assaults against the Gaza Strip. Israel confirms continued assassinations" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/6)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"The Syrian People Cannot Be Deceived"

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Izz-al-Din al-Darwish, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (1/8): "The problem of the Lebanese

assassination of a former Lebanese leader. Asad is seeking stronger Arab support for Syria, including convening an Arab summit to discuss Syria's strained relations with the West, according to some Arab diplomats.

Papers also reported that President Asad received two telephone calls, from Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Libyan President Qaddafi, that focused on current developments in the region.

orchestra, and the one who joined it in Paris former VP Khaddam, is that the Syrian people have a high sense of patriotism and political knowledge, a strong memory, and powers of perception which are sufficient not only to confront the hatred the orchestra promotes, but also to place them where they deserve to be placed.

"... The conspiracy against Syria is now clear, and so are its instruments. The Syrian popular and official position toward this conspiracy is also clear, and it is embodied in the solid national unity.

"How could this not be the conviction of the Syrian people when the trumpet of that orchestra Lebanese Druze leader Walid Junblatt calls on the Americans, despite their enmity toward Arabs and Muslims, to occupy Syria, while his follower in Paris praises him and his positions, spreads poison, and flatters nonobjective media so that they publish his rancorous statements, in which he claims that the Syrian people eat from garbage containers?

"It is historically known that ordeals harden the Syrian people and render them unbreakable. They are now showing the most vivid images of national unity behind their leadership, a leadership that rejects humiliation and joins its people against the plan of Americanization and internationalization, the plan of the Broader Middle East. At the same time, the Syrian people say to those who have abandoned their ranks and to the promoters of the American occupation: You will reap nothing but more failures.

"We ask the leader of the rancorous orchestra: Do you want to be a tool in the hands of the Israelis?

"Your problem is with the Syrian people, not the Syrian leadership. You can be sure about that. There is no problem between Lebanon and Syria as two countries and peoples. The problem is between the Syrian people and persons like you, persons who trade even in homelands. You know that the Syrian people cannot be deceived or subjugated. They do not fear threats, and their heads will remain high."

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"Conspiracy Unveiled"

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Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (1/7): "Lebanese Druze leader Walid Junblatt's call on the United States to invade Syria, as it did Iraq, shows Junblatt's ugly face and malicious intentions against Damascus....

"We desperately needed such statements, through The Washington Post, which is close to the American decision-making circles, so that the Lebanese and Arab public will discover the true nature of this person, who has violated every Lebanese and Arab obligation, and will realize that his campaign against Syria is not a result of a dispute with the political regime in Syria, but is part of the role that he has been assigned to play, along with a Lebanese team that trades in al-Hariri's blood and sheds crocodile tears for the martyrs of Lebanon, whose blood has been used as fuel for the American-Zionist plan and as a bridge for the plan to enter the Arab heart.

"The enemies of Syria are no longer able to hide their hatred and dirty roles. They are saying it loud and clear: One [Junblatt] wants his American masters to occupy Syria, and the other [Khaddam] wagers on breaking the strong national unity and publicly says he wants to incite the Syrian public, drawing strength from foreigners and driven by a lust for power and dollars.

"Plans are being drafted in Western capitals for a vicious war against Syria and its policies and positions.... But Syria is in very good shape, and its national unity will not be shaken, no

assassination of a former Lebanese leader. Asad is seeking stronger Arab support for Syria, including convening an Arab summit to discuss Syria's strained relations with the West, according to some Arab diplomats.

Papers also reported that President Asad received two telephone calls, from Iranian President Ahmadinejad and Libyan President Qaddafi, that focused on current developments in the region.

matter what the ordeals and the conspiracies."

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"The Last Mask"

Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawrah, commented (1/6): "Lebanese Druze leader Walid Junblatt has called on the United States to invade Syria as it did Iraq....

"Junblatt is searching to redeem himself, to wash away his violations, to correct his foolish acts, to vent his hatred, and to remove his complexes through the destruction of Syria and perhaps the entire Arab region....

"It is a miserable time when some Arabs draw strength against their own home from an enemy skilled at killing and destruction.... The last mask has fallen from the face of the person who long claimed to be an Arab nationalist"

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"Ankara Corrects: Mere Allegations"

Ahmad Hamadeh, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (1/6): "The Turkish Prime Minister denied reports that Washington is seeking a joint policy with Ankara against Syria and asserted that Turkish-Syrian relations are good.

"Who wants to spoil Syrian-Turkish relations at this particular time?

"We come up with nothing new if we say that it is the Israeli factor, which no one can ignore. This factor was and still is negatively affecting these relations, which Damascus and Ankara want to serve as a factor of stability and security for the whole

region. We come up with nothing new if we say that the Israeli factor is trying to respond to Erdogan government's balanced policies toward Syria, the Arabs, and Turkey's neighbors on the one hand and its effort to minimize its relations with the Israeli entity on the other.

"The desire of the Syrian and Turkish people to develop their relations is based on their deep-rooted cultural bonds...."

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"Recover from Illusion"  
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Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (1/8): "President Bush has turned to expanded consultations with former secretaries of state and defense over Iraq because all his previous attempts to save face and regain support for his policy have been in vain.

"But Bush's new activity is an opportunity to make the current administration discover the magnitude of its mistakes and the disastrous impact of its plans on the United States and on world peace, security, and stability....

"Former US officials should take this opportunity to explain the facts to President Bush and to urge him to end the occupation of Iraq.... Will they succeed in making the Bush Administration wake up from its illusions of war and alleged victories?"

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